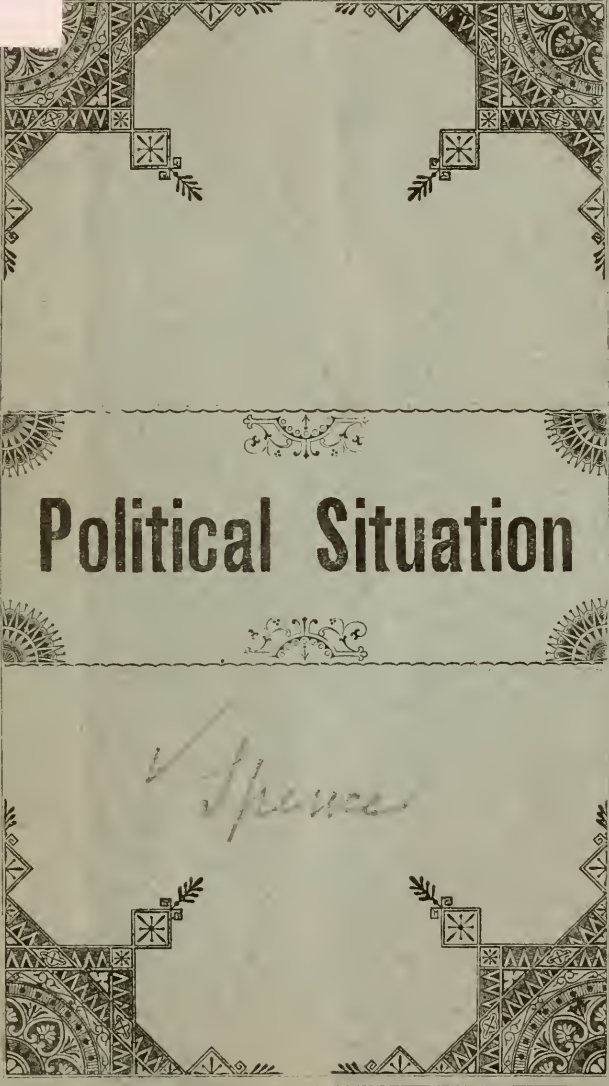
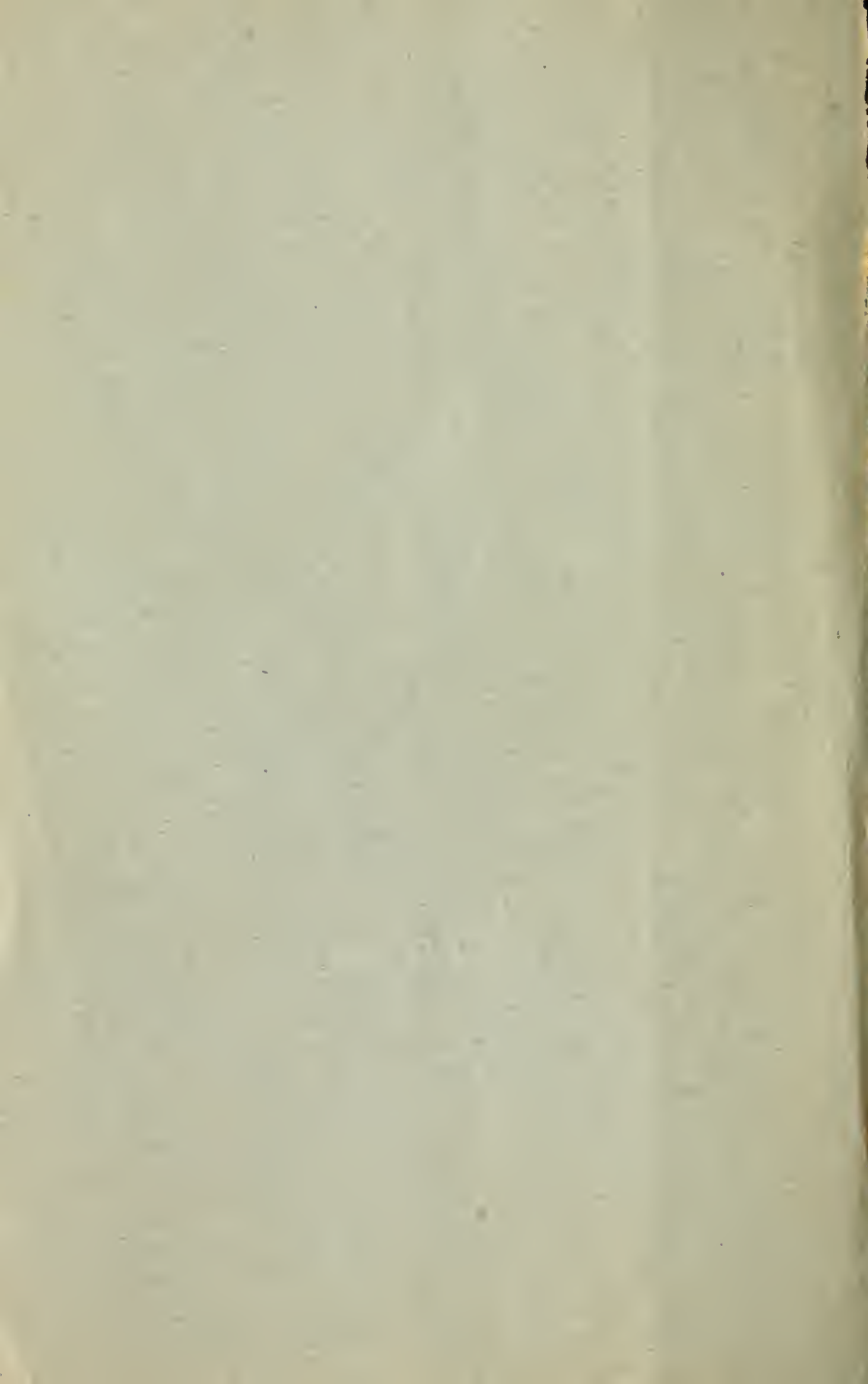


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# Political Situation

*Spence*



THE  
POLITICAL SITUATION.

A REPLY

—BY—

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1776  
JULIAN S. SPENCE.


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# The Political Situation.

## Number 1.

THE venerable Horatio Seymour and the Hon. George S. Boutwell, in the *North American Review* for February, 1883, asseverate and theorize on "The Political Situation".

A perusal of the respective articles, at once discloses the political animus of the one, and the firm self-assured convictions of the other. The asseverations of the one, approaching so closely the exhalations of passion, prejudice and disappointment, scarcely rise above the ordinary newspaper tirade. The bold, frank, dispassionate conclusions of the other, evidence a hope that is not yet dead, which, it must be conceded, is always the better way to deal with unpropitious foreshadowings.

Mr. Boutwell says: "The recent overthrow of the Republican party is not an exceptional event in

political affairs, nor need we infer therefrom that its days of power are past."

Mr. Seymour says: "The result of this year's elections, (1882), have excited much comment. At first view they seemed to be due to the dissensions in the republican ranks, but on closer study their explanation is found to lie deeper; it is a ground swell, of which all surface disturbances are effects, not causes. To get an understanding of this subject, it is necessary that we dismiss from our minds all partizan prejudices, for it concerns the organic principles of our Government, and demands a thoughtful consideration."

These opinions show the opposite degrees of significance which these two political thinkers are inclined to attach to the late republican reverses throughout the country.

According to the one, it is but little more than an ordinary affair, and that there is yet hope for the country. According to the other, it is an event of momentous import, involving the "organic principles of our Government".

It is however, that part of the article appearing under the signature of Mr. Seymour with which I have more particularly to do, and to which I am induced to offer this humble reply.

The author having been so long out of politics, has had ample time for studious observation, and

the maturing of a judgment presumably ripe for political thought. Whatever may have been his habits in respect to a close observation of the signs of the times, in their relation to the science of politics, during these years of retirement, it is quite evident that he has not dismissed entirely from his mind, as he would have us infer, all "partizan prejudices," in the discussion of this question.

Aside from a few general principles, and the statement of a few undeniable facts, his assertions in respect to the *true causes* of the present political situation, are mere *nudas allegationes*, which, to one whose whole life has been spent outside the pale of political dissensions, who has been a silent, though interested observer of the strifes and turmoils of the contending elements, are not arguments of weight or importance.

But, since the question "concerns the organic principles of our Government, and demands a thoughtful consideration," it is well that all partisan prejudices be dismissed, and that it be met candidly and fairly, without aspersions on the one hand, or egotistical assumptions on the other—and least of all, criminations which may be unfounded, for no one knows better than the sober, political thinker that these are not arguments calculated to

convince the reason, whatever influence they may otherwise have.

Mr. Seymour's apprehended dangers to the Government are little varied from those of Thomas Jefferson, the father of Mr. Seymour's political creed.

A comparison of the two, in a single instance, will sufficiently demonstrate the similarity. Mr. Seymour says :

“The American people are divided into two parties ; these grow out of the form of our Government, and each is needed for its preservation. All agree that there is a division line between the powers of the General and State Governments. To enlarge unduly the powers of the States endangers the Union. To extend unduly the jurisdiction of Congress leads to corruption. \* \* \* \* \* A feeling grew up that the stability of the General Government might be insured by giving to it larger powers. Jurisdiction was mistaken for strength. This sentiment was carried too far ; for, while State Rights have been unduly magnified, they still exist, and are as sacred as the rights of the General Government.”

*J. d.* Thomas Jefferson was Secretary of State under Washington. During his second term, Alexander Hamilton was Secretary of the Treasury ; John Adams was Vice-President. Hamilton, Washington and Adams were leaders of the Federal party ;



Thomas Jefferson was leader of the "Anties" or "Republican party.

Hamilton and Jefferson became bitter political enemies, and the latter eventually proved to be a disturbing element in the administration.

While there does not appear to have been any absolute rupture between him and the President, nevertheless, Mr. Jefferson was soon forced to retire from office, and it was on his return to his seat at Monticello that he wrote his famous letter to Mazzei, his Italian friend, in which he portrays the dangers to the Government, as he conceived them to be, as follows :

"The aspect of our politics has wonderfully changed since you left us April 24, 1796. In place of that noble love of liberty and republican government which carried us triumphantly through the war, an anglican monarchical and aristocratical party has sprung up, whose avowed object is to draw over us the substance, as they have already done the forms, of the British Government. \* \*

\* \* Against us are *the executive*, the judiciary, two out of the three branches of legislation, all the officers of the Government, all who want to be officers, all timid men who prefer the calm of despotism to the boisterous sea of liberty ; British merchants and Americans trading on British capitals, speculators and holders in the banks and public funds, a contrivance invented for the pur-

pose of corruption, and for assimilating us in all things to the rotten, as well as to the sound parts of the British model.

It would give you a fever were I to name to you the apostates who have gone over to these heresies, men who were Samsons in the field and Solomons in the council, but who have had their heads shorn by the harlot of England.

In short, we are likely to preserve the liberty we have obtained only by unremitting labors and perils. But we shall preserve it; and our mass and weight of wealth on the good side is so great as to leave no danger that force will ever be attempted against us.

We have only to awake and snap the liliputian cords with which they have been entangling us during the first sleep which succeeded our labors."

Mr. Jefferson, at the time he penned this letter, was one of the "outs," as was also Mr. Seymour when he wrote this article. The former was sorely troubled with political nausea, superinduced by the great popularity and consequent success of his political rivals; while the latter had been tossed about on the waves of the great sea of politics, until every aspiration of mind, every hope of his nature, were clouded over with misgivings, with doubts, with uncertainties.

The same principle moved them both to throw out these warnings. The difference in circum-

stances surrounding them, respectively, at the different epochs, accounts for the variance in the degree of intensity, with which their feelings, thoughts and apprehensions are portrayed; and this constitutes the chief dissimilarity.

It will be seen from this that the democratic cry of "*danger*" is not new. Having its inception in the mind of the father of the party, it has become hereditary, and after this lapse of a hundred and ten years it has lost none of its direfulness, but little of its vigor. No one will dispute the fact that the country, while it has continued to live, has prospered as well. This being so I am prompted—not that I deem it expedient—to give some slight attention to Mr. Seymour's reiterated cry of *danger*, to be resolved whether there is any danger after all these years of growth and prosperity.

I repeat then, Mr. Seymour says :

"The American people are divided into two parties." He does not identify, in express terms, the personnel of these parties, but says: "These grow out of the form of our government; each is needed for its preservation." In the next sentence we get an inkling. He continues: "All agree that there is a division line between the powers of the General and State Governments. To enlarge unduly the powers of the States endangers the Union."

To extend unduly the jurisdiction of Congress leads to corruption."

Admitting these as general propositions, the secret tenor of the author's train of thought is here disclosed. The two great parties into which the American people are divided can be none other than the two grand divisions of people residing respectively on either side of that imaginary line established in ante-bellum days and ascribed to "Mason and Dixon." That this is the author's ulterior meaning becomes a settled conviction when we consider the fact that he has, during a long political life been, by choice and affiliation, a member of the political party whose watchword has been from early the interminable cry of "State Rights," that bugbear of constitutional government, nowhere agitated more bitterly, nowhere resultant of less important consequences.

He says: "The division of our country into free and slave States, led the latter, out of fear of Federal interference, to carry the doctrine of State Rights too far. Civil war was the result."

In how far the present political situation is attributable to this ostensible truth it seems to be difficult to discover; but a close observer of the political events of this country will not readily coincide in this statement of fact.

The doctrine of "State Rights," as much as it has been agitated in Congress and out of Congress by parties or individuals, never resulted in anything quite so serious as civil war. The most that can be said of it is, that it had an indirect tendency, combined with other more potent forces, to precipitate that sanguinary result.

I do not feel called upon to enumerate historical facts, but during the long time that the democratic party had control of national affairs in cannot be denied that the rights of States, and especially of the Southern States, were firmly established, as firmly as it was in their minds to establish them. These were fixed up under the administrations of Jefferson, Jackson, Polk, Pierce and Buchanan, until there was not a single right claimed by the States but was free from all possible Federal interference, with the exception, perhaps, of slavery, and of this, the democratic party was the greatest agitator, owing to its uncontrollable desire for the extension of slavery and the absorption of territory.

Time and again was the question of slavery settled to the satisfaction of the South, and as many times, by it, was the compact broken. Mr. Jefferson was opposed to slavery and desired its abolition. As early as 1779, in a code of laws re-

ported by him to the legislature of Virginia, he provided for the abolition of slavery. The provision was stricken out, the State desired it otherwise. Again in Congress in 1784 he reported a bill for the government of all the national territory lying beyond the limits of the original thirteen States, and for the *exclusion of slavery therefrom*

Congress refused to adopt the anti-slavery clause of this bill. The States desired the extension of slavery. And so it was extended, until it became an element of power in the land, before which government itself must succumb.

There were expedients resorted to to quiet the fears of the contending elements and to secure to the States this *right*.

The "Missouri Compromise" was to settle the question forever, no further encroachments were to be made upon it, no further extensions of its limits were to be suffered. This, as is well known, was a measure submitted by the friends of slavery and was satisfactory to them, and the great party across the line, helped them to thus definitely fix it for all time to come. The Federal Government in this certainly evinced no desire to interfere further with this State Right.

The satisfaction, however, proved of momentary duration. Stephen A. Douglas brought forth his

hobby of "Squatter Sovereignty" and over-turned "Missouri Compromise," then followed "Border Ruffianism," "Bleeding Kansas," "John Brown," "Harper's Ferry," and "CIVIL WAR."

The agitation of State Rights was a mere incident, and although it is not yet dead, as Mr. Seymour avers, its potency was fairly spent and dissolved in the great struggle for slavery and its extension.

Mr. Seymour comes now to dilate upon that other possible myth, "Centralization." A term vague enough in its application to the political possibilities of this country, and left even more vague by the author in his article. Perhaps I should leave it so as well. A word, however, seems to be necessary.

To show that President Garfield entertained aspirations in this mythical direction, the author says: "He expressed his joy that power gravitated more and more toward the National Capital."

It is not contended that these are the President's words, and the author has not deemed it expedient to give them, but instead cites a paragraph from an address delivered by a member of the Cabinet in 1880, as conclusive proof of the centralizing tendencies of the republican party. The paragraph is as follows:



“It must not be forgotten that this Government is no longer the simple machinery it was in the early days of the Republic. The bucolic age of America is over. \* \* \* \* \* They are the interests of nearly fifty millions of people spread over an immense surface, with occupations of endless variety and great magnitude, producing interests so pushing, powerful, and so constantly appealing to the Government, rightfully or wrongfully, that the requirements of statesmanship demanded in this age are far different from those which sufficed a century ago.”

It must be admitted that a centralization of power, such at least as defines the nature of monarchical governments, endangers more or less the liberties of the people, and, of course, is inconsistent with the principles of republicanism.

To guard against this admitted danger, all possible precautions were taken by the patriots of the revolution, and in the formation of the Constitution no loop-hole was left, whereat any terrorizing monster could creep in to destroy the fabric. Nothing more horrible than a *bugbear* has ever yet managed to effect an entrance, which, in its weak, harmless condition, has sufficed only to bestir the people to renewed watchfulness. •

Such a thing as a *dangerous* centralization of power in this Republic or any movement approach-



ing it must, in the very nature of things, be impossible in this country, and if Mr. Seymour has no argument or evidence tending to show this alarming prospect, other than the paragraph above quoted, he may quiet his fears and allay his distrust, for it would be little short of absurdity to attempt to construe a holding of this doctrine from these words, by the author of them, or by the republican party.

The Government of this Republic in the early days was indeed a simple machinery. Beyond the circumscribed limits of the original thirteen Colonies, all was a vast wilderness, but which was the hope and promise of the infant Republic.

From the period of Independence through the interval of Confederation to the days of Constitution and first Presidents, we may trace the transpiration of the "bucolic age of America." It needed the fostering care of tender, watchful hands. The development of internal resources would come in time, but now, patriotism was the essential influence in imparting life and stability, until the experiment should establish the feasibility of Republican Constitutionalism.

To these patriots the term "centralization" was no vague term; they knew and realized its import, had tasted its fruits, hence their jealous resentment

of all encroachments in that direction. The perfecting of the fabric of Constitutional Government was peculiarly the work of these patriots; the prime interests of the people centered there. This once accomplished, however, the Republic came naturally out of its swaddling clothes, and Government itself found something to do in protecting and advancing the new and growing interests of the people. The mission of the nurses had ended. The "bucolic age" was over; mighty industries demanded attention; development of vast natural resources needed encouragement; commerce and new and complicated international relationships demanded a different stamp and type of statesmanship than that which had nursed into life the new Republic. If there is centralization in this, it cannot, in the nature of things, be avoided.

To contrast these sentiments with the patriotic utterances of Washington, as Mr. Seymour is pleased to do, for the purpose of illustrating the proposition that the republican party is gravitating in principle toward a *dangerous* centralization of power, is to fail utterly in the attempt.

Washington, perhaps, more than any other man, in the days of revolution and government making, had reason to declare against this dangerous power and all its attendant encroachments.

No man in public or political life was ever more unjustly charged, and no man ever descended to lower and baser methods to injure an opponent than did Jefferson to break down and smirch the character of President Washington. This while he was Secretary of State, and assimilating the character of a friend. I refer thus frequently to Jefferson with some satisfaction, inasmuch as Mr. Seymour's political party with much pride and some justice refers to him as a model of democratic virtue, integrity and reform. I have no disposition to be unjust to the memory of this great and brilliant statesman, and I refer to him only as I deem it necessary to illustrate the motive of his eminent political follower.

Whatever may have been the motive of Mr. Seymour in referring to the public expressions of Washington in respect to his patriotism, the force of his quotation is lost entirely, when the motive of Washington in giving publicity to these expressions is known and understood.

While yet leading the continental armies through the storms of battle, through alternating defeats and victories, before government was established, and when no one but a malignant enemy or jealous rival could assume the hardihood to impugn his motives, a charge, as base as groundless, was se-

cretly promulgated to cripple his influence and destroy his deserved popularity. A charge that he was incompetent, coupled with dictatorial aspirations. The fact is, it was a plot to supplant him. Imagine the burning indignation of Virginia's statesman and patriot, Patrick Henry, on receiving the following anonymous letter disclosing the plot:

YORKTOWN, Jan. 12, 1778.

DEAR SIR:

"The common danger of our country first brought you and me together. I recollect with pleasure the influence of your conversation and eloquence upon the opinions of this country in the beginning of the present controversy. You first taught us to shake off our idolatrous attachment to royalty, and to oppose its encroachments upon our liberties with our very lives. By these means you saved us from ruin. The independence of America is the off-spring of that liberal spirit of thinking and acting which followed the destruction of the spectres of kings, and the mighty power of Great Britain. But, sir, we have only passed the Red Sea. A dreary wilderness is still before us, and unless a Moses or a Joshua are raised up in our behalf we must perish before we reach the promised land. We have nothing to fear from our enemies on the way. General Howe, it is true, has taken Philadelphia, but he has only changed his prison. His dominions are bounded on all sides by his out-sentries. America can only be

undone by herself. She looks up to her councils and arms for protection, but alas ! what are they ? Her representation in Congress dwindled to only twenty-one members—her Adams, her Wilson, her Henry are no more among them. Her councils weak, and partial remedies applied constantly for universal diseases. Her army, what is it ? A major-general, belonging to it, called it a few days ago, in my hearing, *a mob*. Discipline unknown or *wholly* neglected. The quartermaster and commissary's departments, filled with idleness, ignorance and peculation ; our hospitals crowded with six thousand sick, but half provided with necessities or accomodations, and more dying in them in one month than perished in the field during the whole of the last campaign. The money depreciating, without any effectual measures being taken to raise it ; the country distracted with the Don Quixote attempts to regulate the price of provisions ; an *artificial* famine created by it, and a *real* one dreaded from it. The spirit of the people failing through a more intimate acquaintance with the causes of our misfortune, many submitting daily to General Howe, and more wishing to do it, only to avoid the calamities which threaten our country. But is our case desperate ? by no means. We have wisdom, virtue and strength *enough* to save us, if they could be called into action. *The northern army* has shown us what Americans are capable of doing with a *general* at their head. The spirit of the southern army is no way inferior to the spirit

of the northern. A Gates, a Lee, or a Conway, would in a few weeks render them an irresistible body of men. The last of the above officers has accepted of the new office of inspector-general of our army, in order to reform abuses; but the remedy is only a palliative one. In one of his letters to a friend he says, “a great and good God hath decreed America to be free—or the \* \* \* \* \* and weak counsellors would have ruined her long ago.” You may rest *assured* of *each* of the facts related in this letter. The author of it is one of your Philadelphia friends. A hint of his name, if found out by the handwriting, must not be mentioned to your most intimate friend. Even the letter *must* be thrown in the fire. But some of its contents ought to be made public in order to awaken, enlighten and alarm our country. I rely upon your prudence, and am, dear sir, with my usual attachment to *you* and to our beloved independence, yours sincerely.”

HIS EXCELLENCY, P. HENRY.

Patrick Henry was a strong, uncompromising friend of Washington, and he knew the charge to be, as unfounded as the plot was base, and he hesitated not a moment in appraising his friend of the scheme on foot to destroy him.

Washington returned the following replies;

VALLEY FORGE, March 27, 1778.

DEAR SIR:

About eight days past I was honoured with your

favour of the 20th ultimo. Your friendship, sir, in transmitting me the anonymous letter you had received, lays me under the most grateful obligations; and, if anything could give a still further claim to my acknowledgements, it is the very polite and delicate terms in which you have been pleased to make the communication.

I have ever been happy in supposing that I held a place in your esteem, and the proof of it you have afforded on this occasion makes me peculiarly so. The favourable light in which you hold me is truly flattering, but I should feel much regret if I thought the happiness of America so intimately connected with my personal welfare, as you so obligingly seem to consider it. All I can say is, that she has ever had, and I trust she ever will have my honest exertions to promote her interest. I cannot hope that my services have been the best, but my heart tells me they have been the best that I could render.

That I have erred in using the means in my power for accomplishing the objects of the arduous, exalted station with which I am honoured, I cannot doubt; nor do I wish my conduct to be exempted from the reprehension it may deserve. Error is the portion of humanity, and to censure it, whether committed by this or that public character, is the prerogative of freemen. \* \* \* \* This is not the only secret, insidious attempt that has been made to wound my reputation. There have been others equally base, cruel and ungenerous; because



conducted with as little frankness, and proceeding from views, perhaps, as personally interested.”

I am, dear sir, &c.,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

To his Excellency, PATRICK HENRY, ESQ.,  
Governor of Virginia.

CAMP, March 28, 1778.

DEAR SIR :

“Just as I was about to close my letter of yesterday, your favour of the fifth inst. came to hand. I can only thank you again in the language of the most undissembled gratitude for your friendship, and assure you, the indulgent disposition which Virginia in particular, and the States in general, entertain towards me gives me the most sensible pleasure. The approbation of my country is what I wish ; and as far as my abilities and opportunity will permit, I hope I shall endeavour to deserve it. It is the highest reward to a feeling mind ; and happy are they who so conduct themselves as to merit it.

The anonymous letter with which you were pleased to favour me, was written by \* \* \* \*  
so far as I can judge from the similitude of hands.  
\* \* \* \*

My caution to avoid everything that could injure the service prevented me from communicating, except to a very few of my friends, the intrigues of a faction which I knew was formed against me, since it might serve to publish our internal dissensions :



but their own restless zeal to advance their views has too clearly betrayed them, and made concealment on my part fruitless. I cannot precisely mark the extent of their views; but it appears, in general, that General Gates was to be exalted on the ruin of my reputation and influence. This I am authorized to say from undeniable facts in my own possession, from publications, the evident scope of which could not be mistaken, and from private detractions industriously circulated \* \* \* \* , it is commonly supposed, bore the second part in the cabal; and General Conway, I know, was a very active and malignant partisan; but I have good reason to believe that their machinations have recoiled most sensibly upon themselves.

I am, dear sir, &c.,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

His Excellency, PATRICK HENRY, ESQ.,

Governor of Virginia.

Mr. Seymour, it will be seen, has not applied the true test. Washington's purity of thought and character, jealous purpose, and withal, his intense patriotism, would not have given him occasion or thought to declaim with such fervency against a doctrine so pernicious, but for the fact that mercenaries, in the interest of a rival, had sought to raise up this stigma with the hope of fastening it upon him. But this is not all; the failure of this cruel scheme not only induced him to be always on

his guard, but a few years later, when a generous public vindicated his character by making him the first chief executive, followed the futile attempt of Mr. Jefferson above referred to.

He established the *National Gazette* and procured a Frenchman to conduct it. It is said the leading article savored strongly of Jefferson's style, and they attacked bitterly Washington, Hamilton and their measures. It is a matter of history that Jefferson accused Washington and Hamilton, and the Federals generally, of seeking to destroy the Constitution, calling them monarchats, implying monarchical aspirations, and even more, one man power. This we have seen in his Mazzei letter.

Washington complained of these attacks, not of the attacks on him personally; these he despised, but that *every* act of the Government should be thus abused, was as uncalled for as it was ungenerous. Jefferson, however, justifies his conduct by saying: "*His paper has saved our Constitution, which was galloping fast into monarchy, and has been checked by no means so powerfully as that paper.*"

I repeat, no man in public life in this country ever had more potent reasons for proclaiming his patriotism and republicanism than General Washington. Not, let it be understood, that he for a

moment feared the managers of government would ever permit it to take on the forms of monarchy to the destruction of the Constitution, but for the reason that he himself had been vilely accused of an attempt to pull down that which he had labored so arduously to build up: the fabric of the Constitution.

Again Mr. Seymour says, he has "no intention to impeach the patriotism of those who hold opinions which grew out of the excitements of the civil war, but charges, that in their eagerness to extend the jurisdiction of the General Government they went too far, and exposed the country to unforeseen dangers."

He then attempts to make this clear by a review of the events of the last few years, and in doing so makes this wholesale charge.

"The increase in the revenues of the Government has given to Congressmen vast sums of money to vote away for various purposes. Much is used for the payment of the public debt; much is voted away for the benefit of those who have schemes which they wish to have executed at the public cost. This draws from all parts of the Union shrewd and unscrupulous men who seek a share of the land or money given away."

This is nothing but a reiteration, and in no better language, of the charge found in nearly every

issue of the partisan press throughout the country. The charge, if true, establishes a glaring abuse of public confidence and of political freedom. But whether true or not, coming from a responsible source, it is taken up kindly by the enemies of the Republic and magnified into colossal proportions.

To charge that vast sums of national revenues are voted away for private gain of unscrupulous men, is to charge at once *knavery*, *perjury* and *crime* in the wholesale on members of congress; a serious charge to make even for an irresponsible newspaper.

Mr. Seymour in writing this undoubtedly had in mind the much discussed "River and Harbor Bill," inasmuch as that has been denominated the "greatest steal" on record. The president signalized his term of office by his veto of this bill, and those members who voted against it have endeared themselves to the hearts of the people, while those who favored the measure, no matter how honestly, have earned the reproaches of an all wise (?) and impartial public. (?)

Admitting this charge to be true, we naturally turn to look for the cause; Mr. Seymour has not mentioned it, but the conclusion is irresistible from the admitted premises.

The people have elected *knaves* and *rascals*, yea,

more, *villains*, to represent them in the national legislature. A man must be all this, who so far disregards his natural predisposition to honesty and virtue, not to say his oath, and clearly defined public duties.

The author charges much of the corruption to the powerful lobby at Washington.

Lobbies partake something of the nature of the ubiquitous; they are omnipresent, and, it may as well be conceded, well nigh omnipotent. They seem to be a necessary evil, ingrown with the institutions of the country. But suppose we grant the power of the lobby and concede, though, with reluctance, the depravity of Congress, we have conceded then Mr. Seymour's idea of the political situation. Now what is the cure for all this? He says: "All thoughtful men in each party see that this must be corrected, that we must go back to the teachings of the Constitution, and that a strict construction of the powers of Congress will leave less opportunity for corruption."

Let me ask, will a strict construction of the powers of Congress prevent people from electing *rogues* and *rascals* to places of power and trust? Will the teachings of the Constitution open a way for dispersing the lobby, and for keeping unscrupulous

pulous men at home, and shut out congressmen from their contaminating influence?

If the teachings of the Constitution have been departed from, or if the powers of Congress have been unduly enlarged, those are errors which must, in the very nature of things, correct themselves, and while I believe the results of the elections of 1882 were not due to local causes or controversies, they concern fundamental principles which are firm and lasting, and any man or party of men, who may attempt to traverse these principles, will meet obstacles that cannot be overcome.

The great balance wheel of republicanism, set turning in '76, continues to revolve with inappreciable sway,—thanks to Jefferson and the *National Gazette*; “Centralization” cannot interfere with it, not so much even as “State Rights.”

Changes may be made in the woof of the weaving, but these shall be effected in the ordinary way, and in the manner pointed out by the Constitution. Centralization, usurpation, or secession will ever be ineffectual. Already in the second century of the Republic the success of the experiment is firmly established.

Political corruption is always lamentable, but this, like many other evils, will finally suggest its own cure; but, whatever may be said of the pres-

ent political situation, the fundamental principles of this Government cannot be shaken; they have been tested by foes within and foes without, and thereby strengthened in their strength. The present French Republic has lived but little more than a decade, and fears in some quarters have been entertained for its safety, in view of the recent manifesto of Prince Napoleon. But one who has some knowledge of the nature and capabilities of the French Republic—Ex-Minister Washburne—gives it as his deliberate judgment that, “no existing hostile influence can encompass the Republic’s downfall.

Gambetta’s death has encouraged adventurers, but their secret scheming and public prating will be wholly fruitless.”

If this be true of the French Republic thus early in its career when it has entered upon its second century, it will be absurd to talk of centralization and monarchy.

History proves that our Republic has never lacked in patriots. In her time of need her defenders have been found in the cool judgments and brawny arms of a liberty loving people.

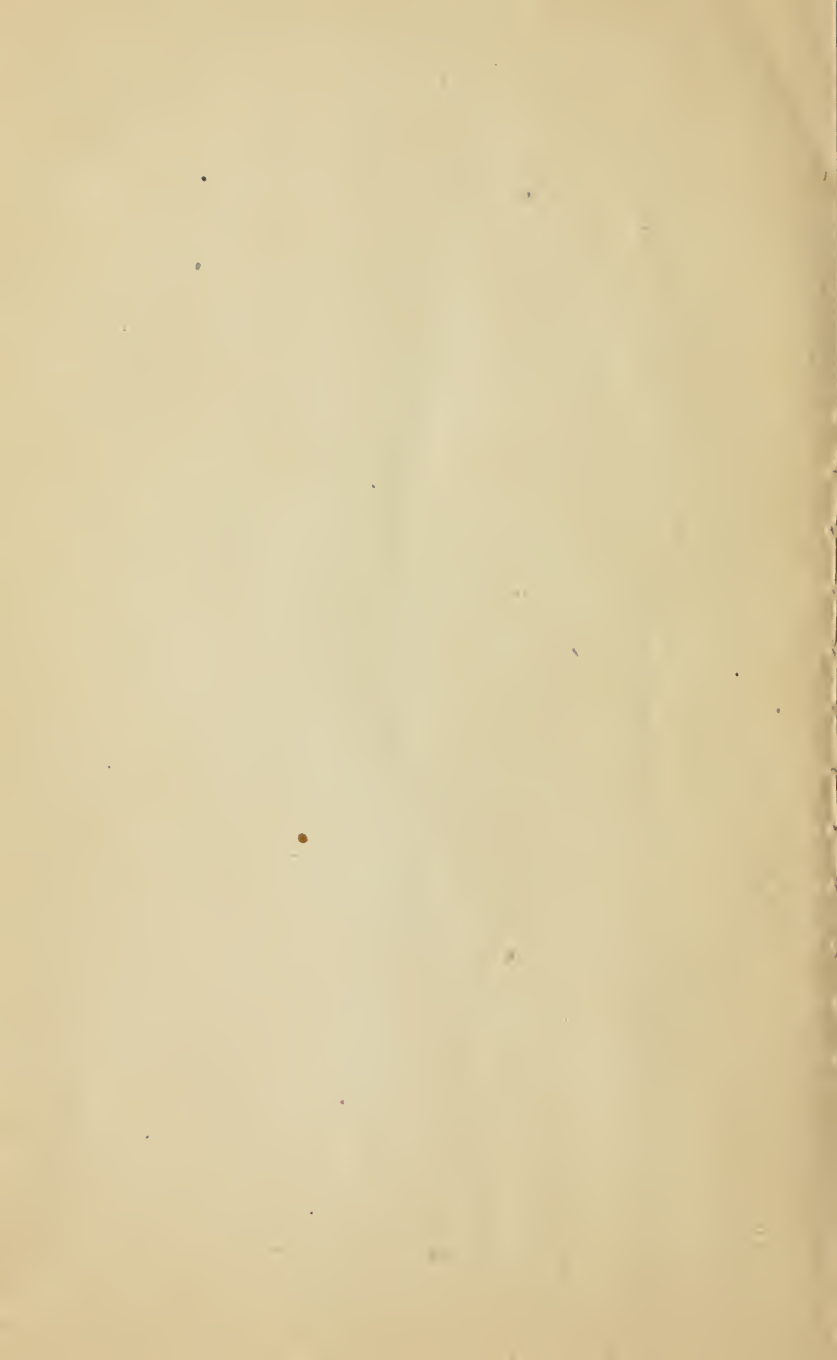
From this examination of the question, and of Mr. Seymour’s article, I am not inclined to regard the “Political Situation” as at all momentous.



Granting the deplorable condition of party politics, I am sensible of no violation of the principles of Government or of the teachings of the Constitution, such as to warrant this "hue and cry" for the safety of the country. That principles have been violated and the more sacred teachings of the Constitution ignored, cannot be denied, but I have a stronger faith in the stability of our institutions and in the Republic bequeathed us by the fathers of the Revolution than to suppose for a moment that any political party can overthrow them at its will, and my faith in these is doubly strengthened since the attempt of 1861. Whatever may be the portent of the political signs which called forth this article from Mr. Seymour, I would not regard the situation with his mournful misgivings, but rather with the hope of Mr. Boutwell, admitting and pointing out the errors of parties, that they may be corrected with the least possible disturbance.









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